

PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE CLAIMS:

~~Please~~ enter the following amended claims:

A¹ 6. (Once Amended) A bridge according to claim 1, wherein the bridge includes a transfer store which stores data received at one of the ports before transferring the data to one or more of the other ports.

7. (Once Amended) A group of bridges comprising a number of bridges according to claim 1, the bridges being coupled via a group link which interconnects the group ports on different bridges in the group.

A² 10. (Once Amended) A group of bridges according to claim 7, wherein the STP uses a port identifier associated with each bridge port, the port identifier representing the priority of the port, and wherein the port identifier of each port in the bridge is stored in the store, and wherein the new BPDUs are group BPDUs which further include an indication of the port identifier of the bridge port at which the received BPDUs were received, wherein the port identifiers are different for each bridge port of each grouped bridge.

A³ 13. (Once Amended) A method according to claim 11, wherein the STP uses a port identifier associated with each bridge port, the port identifier representing the priority of the port, the method further comprising assigning a unique port identifier to each port in the group of bridges.

A⁴ 15. (Once Amended) A method according to claim 11, wherein the STP is a modified version of that defined by the IEEE 802.1D standard.